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SIXPENCE

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## Notes of the Week

It is really too late for Lord Lytton to pour oil on the turbulent waters of Manchurian affairs, as he has tried to do in a speech made to Japanese students in London. For the Lytton report, with its absurd, prejudiced and impracticable recommendations, began a state of high tension which the League of Nations and its committee of nineteen, including nonentities, has made worse with every hour of its deliberations. If the League is to offer advice and leave it at that, as Lord Lytton now suggests, what becomes of the League or of its pretensions? If it tries to enforce its judgment, what becomes of peace?

For our part, we have stated and restated our view in general and in particular. We are convinced of the justice of Japan's case and persuaded that Japanese control in Manchukuo is the sole guarantee of any peace or order. Beyond that, these attempts by nineteen outsiders to wound Japanese feelings and hamstring Japanese policy have very few supporters in England. Any attempt to drag us into a quarrel with Japan for the sake of the nineteen and in the cause of a non-existent Chinese Government would bring down even this National Government. And if this fact be recognised clearly, there may be a better chance of that solution by direct Sino-Japanese negotiation which is the only sane policy.

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It would be absurd to take too seriously the half-witted disloyalty of the Oxford Union which by a vote of 275 to 153 declared that it would in no circumstances fight for its King and Country. Never in its history has the Union represented University opinion. In the old days everyone joined

The Silly Union

it because letters—it was penny post then—were stamped free and because by arrangement with the Clarendon its members obtained a hot breakfast on Sundays when the College kitchens were damped down. Some few clever people used it as a ladder for their political ambitions. The majority of its practising members were composed of men who shrank from facing the rough and tumble of college life and found a refuge for their rebellion or timidity in its peaceful precincts. The ordinary man never put his nose through its door except perhaps for a brief glance at the news. Nowadays membership of the Union is far less universal than it was, but still its doors are open wide to the crank and faddist. It would be easy enough for the life members of the Union to gather in force and have the offending resolution expunged from the archives, but is it worth it? It is not wise to pay too much attention to the antics of foolish young people in quest of notoriety.

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Feeling in favour of the Tote on the dog track is increased, not lessened, in the House of Commons, and this, we are sure, reflects opinion in the country. The Greyhound Racing Association has made proposals, by which the evil of excessive gambling would obviously be diminished, and these seem to a majority of members an adequate basis for compromise. Compromise of some sort is inevitable, despite the heterogeneous and ill-assorted opponents of the Tote. Without it the gaming laws slide back into the dangerous welter of hypocrisy, confusion, and anomaly from which they have been dragged so painfully. The Government have, quite rightly, followed the Committee's advice on Tote Clubs. On the greyhound track they had better desert these keepers of their conscience, unless they really want to back a non-starter.

The Power of the Dog

If it be true that the Cabinet are considering and even contemplating action to enable local authorities to use transitional benefit as part payment of wages for public works, we may be on the way to a revolutionary change in the whole theory and practice of a "dole" system. It sounds a little too good to be true, since such a policy would accord so well with common sense. But, sooner or later, we must adopt such expedients. It would, indeed, be impossible to contemplate that perpetuation of doles on the grand scale which seems inevitable for years to come, unless means were found by which millions of our workers could be saved, or given a chance of saving themselves, from complete unemployment. If the modern State cannot allow its citizens to starve, it must not suffer them to see complete corruption.

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It is not too much to say that the Indian question is the most living issue at the present moment before the British public, for the manner of its settlement will become the precedent for subsequent application to other parts of our Empire. There is indeed hardly a question, economic or political, which that settlement does not affect. It is obvious that if we lose India we shall, by this precedent, within a generation lose the ports which connect us with Australia and New Zealand, and those Dominions will be isolated. At the same time our East African Empire will be lost. Let us remember also that population has grown with the demands of an Empire, and, if we destroy what we have built so carefully the unemployment question will become intensified by ten. The Conservative party was once the Imperial party. Where does it stand to-day? Mr. MacDonald, who tells us he is still a Socialist is, with the assistance of Mr. Baldwin, forcing on the "National" party, mainly composed of Conservatives, the Socialist ideas on Indian self-government which he has always held. Yet British experts, who have held administrative posts in India, assure us, almost unanimously, that this policy must destroy India and reduce it to the chaos and war existing in China.

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Two parrot cries may be the cause of much of the trouble. One is that we must go forward, that it is impossible to go back. "Those behind Yet the original Montagu-cry 'Forward'" Chelmsford reforms (on which be curses) provided clearly and explicitly for going back, if the experimental forms of self-government in India proved that we were going too fast or too far. Of course we could go back—as we did by the Bengal ordinances—if we could summon enough sense and resolution. The

other parrot-cri is that we are committed. Yet Mr. Baldwin has twice stated, at Newton Abbot and in the House of Commons, that there is no commitment. "Everyone," he said, "is uncommitted—for the simple reason that it is impossible for anyone to pronounce a definite opinion until a definite plan is before us." It is true that since he said this the plans before us have become devilishly definite. All the more reason for rank and file Conservatives to prevent their party from being committed.

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Whatever the strength of faction or the force of conflict within the hierarchy of the National Government, the party of Default in the House of Commons grows stronger. It becomes increasingly clear that we cannot pay America the June instalment of the debt, whether we should or should not if we could. Yet it is probably true that Mr. Baldwin's stock has gone up lately with Conservatives, while Mr. Neville Chamberlain's has been slumping. The unpopularity of a Chancellor of the Exchequer in ruinous times may be responsible for most of the slump. But it is inconceivable that Mr. Baldwin's access of popularity can be due to his Indian or American debt policies. It is largely personal and it has, no doubt, been nourished by the anti-Baldwin campaigns of Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere.

But it is, in the main, more adventitious than this, for it springs from the great number of "moderate" Conservatives, the left-wingers of a party which only represents some of their views, who were elected to support a National Government. Thus the paradox appears that a leader of Toryism owes his ascendancy not to the Conservatism which he professes, but to the Socialism which he confesses. Which is one reason why the National Government is so often without a firm and consistent policy at home or abroad.

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A large decline is reported in the number of omnibus and tube passengers in the London area, and one of the commentators fatuously suggests that the Cockney is beginning to walk to his work as a measure of economy.

#### **Fewer London Passengers**

But, however it might benefit his pocket or his appetite to avoid Lord Ashfield's transport system, the ordinary Londoner, whether clerk or manager or artisan, has not the time to foot the four or five miles that separates home from office or shop or factory. The causes of the fall in traffic must be sought in other directions.

In spite of cheap fares, fewer people come to town in the afternoon than formerly; cinemas and tea-shops have both noticed that there is less business of the suburban class in the West End than

at the height of the boom four or five years ago. But the decline of the local tripper has also been paralleled by the decay of the tourist, provincial and foreign. These two factors, and not any noticeable zeal for locomotion among Londoners, probably account for the change.

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It is good to know, although at the moment of writing no official announcement has been made, that the new Cunarder will actually be built. For the shilly-shally history of its construction has not been encouraging from any point of view. The policy of the Cunard Steamship Company is its own affair, and if it seemed good to begin this mammoth liner, to stop it, to haggle about it, and eventually to go on with it, the disinterested layman can be no judge of such a policy. But if the Government in the end provide the help, in one form or another, which they refused with a rude and even violent contumacy, little can be said in favour of their share of the haggling. Especially when we regard the figures of unemployment and remember the subsidies paid by Foreign Governments to their national shipping companies.

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Shoplifting seems to come in with the Spring, or at any rate is more prevalent in the early months of the year. What amazes us is the extraordinarily light sentences which women, who are generally of quite good class, receive. Silly excuses make it possible for these women thieves to get off with little or no retribution, whilst men are probably far more heavily sentenced for less flagrant stealing and children are sent to reformatory institutions.

#### **Burglar Bill —and Others**

A woman has just been bound over because she is said to be suffering from influenza. Considering that she was able to stow away no less than five pairs of stockings, a fur collar, two bottles of scent, six handkerchiefs, two tablets of soap, a cap, a pot of cream, a bottle of brillantine and a bottle of bath salts it would almost seem that she had had previous experience—or the influenza must have been of a peculiarly virulent nature!

If Burglar Bill, surprised with the Duchess' diamonds in his pocket, pleaded that he had influenza and so did not know what he was doing, and was even able to procure the prison doctor's certificate to this effect, would he be given the benefit of the doubt and bound over?

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One of the really agreeable functions of life was the luncheon given by the *National Review* last week to celebrate its fiftieth birthday—which explains the youthful vigour of our resolute contemporary. Generally such meals, however good the food and drink, are ruined by

#### **The National Review**

boring, indigestible, and insincere speeches. Here was the exception. There were only three people who opened their mouths—General Sir Ivor Maxse who, as chairman, added some wit to a precise and splendid brevity; Lord Bridgeman who paid the tribute of an intimate, but not fulsome friend to that Leo Maxse who, while he lived, was the *National Review*; and Lady Milner, who has taken her brother's place. The *National Review* is the proof of how admirably she carries on his work and his tradition. Her speech, brief, forceful, sincere and courageous, was proof of a quality of mind and character which pours new life into the journal which she edits.

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Herren Ramsay und Macdonald, as our Prime Minister once found himself described, have been at it again. At all events, the Prime Minister has been talking sound sense, in a letter to the Bethnal Green Council, about State-aided schemes to relieve unemployment, and one wonders what either of his other selves may think about it. He has now discovered, by the painful experience of his late Administration, that these schemes are extravagant, ineffective, and a hindrance to the recovery of trade. He gives chapter and verse for his conversion—or apostasy—and his arguments are logical, ruthless, and convincing. But he betrays one fatal weakness. He has nothing but platitudes to put in the place of the relief works which failed. Nor, it is true, has anyone else in all our shaken world—except a few persons of no vast importance, each of whom is for the present labelled "crank" by the platitudinists. But no one else is Prime Minister of a National Government in England—luckily for no one else.

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The daily newspapers display a strange disinclination to interest themselves in or to inform their readers about the electricity supply and distribution situation in this country. Just why that may be we do not profess to understand, but when we reflect on the supreme importance of electricity in this highly developed industrial and domestic age and on the remarkable efforts that are being made to organise a State-owned and State-controlled corner in this unquestionably essential commodity the apparent conspiracy of silent indifference seems to us all the more queer.

#### **The Daily Silence**

A month ago we sounded a note of warning about the activities of the Joint Electricity Authority, which is a public body charged, in effect, with the duty of nationalising as speedily as may be one of this country's most vital services. That it has not succeeded as swiftly as it was supposed to do is, in our view, an admirable thing.

Let us look at just two or three of the developments since the *Saturday Review*, alone on this matter among all the organs of public opinion in this country, pointed out the dangers of this latest and most ambitious attempt at an industrial and commercial bureaucracy.

Last week we gave the news from America of how that country, having experimented for years with the plan which this country is now being urged to adopt, has found that the plan has failed and so is preparing to decentralise and revert to the methods which counties and boroughs and areas in Great Britain are now being urged to abandon. That was one interesting sequel.

But hard on the heels of it came another, and that was the announcement that the report of the Electricity Supply Board which controls the Irish Free State national electricity undertaking developed from the River Shannon, showed a deficiency in 1931 of £200,121, and a further deficiency in 1932 (notwithstanding an enormous increase in charges) of £24,627.

So much for America and Ireland. Now let us look at England. We mentioned a fortnight ago the challenge which the County of London Electricity Supply Co. was issuing to the Joint Electricity Authority on the issue of the taking over of the Caterham undertaking. This has since been the subject of inquiry by the Electricity Commissioners, and one fact brought out in cross-examination of one of the witnesses is that in the year ended March 31, 1932, the Joint Electricity Authority incurred a loss, apart from income tax and bad debt reserve, of a little over £20,000, and this notwithstanding that at the beginning of that year there was a surplus brought forward of £37,524.

This revelation was made on February 9. Yet on January 3 the Joint Electricity Authority was announcing that it was allocating £15,000 for the purpose of reducing and revising lighting and power charges in the Thames Valley and mid-Surrey districts. Why should it do that if it has just lost £20,000? We do not know. Nor, to revert to our original point, do we know why more public attention is not directed to theories which America is rejecting after having tried them, which have lost great sums of money in Ireland, and which lost more than £20,000 in this country.

The great fall of cliff near Cromer has been described by the popular press as if England were steadily being washed away by the sea. Actually nothing of the kind is happening—the acreage of this country is increasing, not diminishing, and we gain on balance rather more than we lose.

In the present case the downward swing of the Arctic Ocean into that shallow mouth of the Rhine which we call the North Sea has swept away a piece of North Norfolk. But this will presently be restored as an addition to East Suffolk—a glance at the outlets of East Anglian rivers shows how their mouths have consistently been bent southwards by these accretions. The clock of geological time moves so slowly, however, that the loss in the one case, and the gain in the other, has been calculated at an average of a foot a year—in other words, less than a mile all-told since the Roman occupation of Britain.

In a letter which we publish this week a correspondent draws attention to the sinister attack which the British Museum Authorities are conducting against Bedford Square. It is to be hoped that no carelessness on the part of the public will permit the desecration of the Adelphi site, that comforting oasis of the 18th century, in the heart of the Strand. There is a bill, a vague and dangerous bill, which is to be introduced into Parliament: it seeks to obtain powers to monkey with existing rights and with the whole design of the Adams brothers. Surely we have enough mammoth buildings without destroying a real work of art to make way for another.

If Sir William Robertson was not a great commander, he was surely a great soldier. And he was more than that, for he was a considerable man who would have meant something definite in the life of his time wherever fate and fortune had summoned him. There can be only one doubt as to the right direction of his calling and that doubt crept in when one looked at Robertson. He was so typically a soldier and a cavalry officer—even, when one thought of it, the ex-ranker Field Marshal—that it seemed odd that any one man could both look and play the part so well. And his conversation emphasised this likeness of the man to his job.

He was one of the kindest of men. But he had a gruff voice, a disciplinary manner, and a confident expectation that others would go where and how he thought they ought to go. To give him a lift in a car was to be instructed in the art of driving it and to recognise that Sir William Robertson's idea of risk or safety was definite and precise. To hold, notwithstanding, to one's own idea was not, however, the slowest way to his confidence and friendship. He was a witty and entertaining guest at a dinner party and an enthusiastic gun at many shoots. He was the mainstay of war and the preacher of peace—because he knew war and dreaded it.

Death, like misfortune, makes strange bed-fellows, but two more different spirits never entered Charon's boat together than Sir William Robertson and Sir Arthur Thomson. Arthur Thomson was one of the gentlest and most genial men that ever lived. Indeed, he might have gone further in his own field of biology had he had a little more vim in him; but whether it was a minor university clamouring for a lecture or an unfortunate editor demanding an article, he could never say no—with the result that time which could, and, in fact, should have been spent on study and research was given to charming little expositions on birds, beasts, and fishes in the popular press, and equally charming attempts to prove that after all there was really no conflict between religion and science. Arthur Thomson leaves a pleasant rather than a permanent memory.

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The citizens of the United States have long been the favourite victims of the confidence trickster;

#### **Succour for the Suckers**

for they seem to leave their business acumen behind them when they come to Europe. Now apparently they have been pursued to their own homes by the ingenious swindler who holds out the promise of a fortune to all who will subscribe towards the cost of prosecuting some claim or other to some forgotten English estate. It is pleasant to hear of mass meetings in the towns of the Middle West, collecting funds to establish an unknown person's claim to Sir Francis Drake's estate. The "undesirable alien," who it is said is to be deported for the better protection of the innocent American, must have had some fun in choosing suitable names, and one is glad that he did not omit "Green or Greene." We too have had our gold brick and our Spanish prisoner frauds, but they were on a far more modest scale.

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We are all sun-worshippers nowadays. Apollo is our god of light and health. There is little enough sunlight in these islands, and when it shines we move heaven and earth to avoid it. Our houses are built as though men were moles and only thrive in darkness. In Germany and Holland the "sun-house" is a common-place. Perhaps it will be so before long in this country also, at all events a beginning has been made. Houses have been designed and built which do try to entrap sunshine. They have been designed quite definitely by Mr. H. A. Welch, the architect of Messrs. Haymills, to make the most of every ray of light. It is good to have a dining-room with one side of it nearly all window and to have a noble spread of glass in every room. It is even better to have a flat roof on which one can enjoy sun, fresh air and pri-

vacy as comfortably as the women of a Moorish harem. Even in winter there is more sun than the average town-dweller imagines and a sun-room made of glass in the middle of the roof, complete with an electric fire, should set him sunbathing whenever Phoebus peeps through the clouds.

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A report from Cambridge states that the latest researches carried out in the Cavendish Labora-

#### **The Positive Electron**

tories show that there exists a fundamental particle, which has the same weight and carries the same electrical charge as the electron, but is positively charged, instead of negatively like the latter. It is now common knowledge that physicists for the last twenty years have considered that all matter is composed of two kinds of electrical particles: the positive protons, the weight of which is roughly equal to that of an atom of hydrogen, and the negative electrons, 1836 times lighter, which carried an equal, but opposite, charge of electricity.

This seemed to be as far as the physical analysis of matter would take us, but last year the scientific world was startled by the discovery (also at the Cavendish) of the neutron, a third kind of fundamental particle, equal in weight to the proton; but, as its name implies, electrically neutral. Now comes this exciting announcement about the positive electron. Its discovery, if confirmed, will be welcomed by many physicists, since it will introduce a new kind of symmetry and coherence into the whole subject.

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So the spirit of Gilbert White still stirs, unquiet as the ghost of Hamlet's father, at the roots of the beeches in the famous hangar. At all events the people of Selborne seem to have rebelled successfully against the local authority which

#### **Such places are dangerous**

replaced with nice kind gravel their ancient cobbled footways. Apparently the gravel was laid by Authority and, after a great village agitation, Authority has taken away the gravel and restored the cobble. There is, of course, something English and dogged and truly conservative and Cobbet-like in this preference for older ways of walking. We are bound to admire it. But we are bound also to sympathise with a local authority which seeks "amenities" in the modern sense and gets only kicks for its ha'pence. In a neighbouring village a kindred authority seems anxious to fill up and turf, complete with solitary and misbegotten poplar, a village pond which can no longer be distinguished as a pond. And there is no harm in the amiable project. But will the spirit of Jane Austen stir uneasily in *this* village? These places with tutelary deities, once famed in letters, seem dangerous.

#### **Glorious Apollo**

## Step-father Thames

PERHAPS, if Mr. A. P. Herbert had never called it a "water-bus," there would be more hope of running a Thames Steamer successfully. At all events, with handsome acknowledgements to the prevalent Mr. Herbert, the House of Commons has handed over to the new Transport Board the power to run steamers.

This power was, so to speak, in the occupation of the L.C.C. They made no use of it and were not likely to make any use of it. They have not forgotten a disastrous experiment made twenty years ago and a great many of us are old enough to remember it well. It began with a fanfare of trumpets leading to a positive fandango of public enthusiasm. The Thames, on its course through London Town and County, was to flourish as a highway of traffic; we were to taste its pleasant airs, ignoring some of its aroma, and sun ourselves to business as men may do in other lands. We were to recapture the spirit of some of our historic past, marking where once stood the Globe theatre, remembering the hulks as we steamed past the Tate Gallery, seeing Whistler in the Chelsea reaches, wondering why the South bank remained so comparatively unkempt, feeling a goose tread on our flesh as the Tower of London was signalled off the port bow, and imagining how ships "sail on and on to other lands."

It was all to be so jolly, healthy, wise and wealthy. Accuracy of time-table, speed of service, ease of going aboard and landing, cheapness of fare, multitude of steamers—these were to lure us in our thousands from stuffy train and overcrowded omnibus. The rates were to be reduced by the profits piled up; better construction of smaller boats was to improve on the records of the past and tributes to the L.C.C. were to be mingled with gratitude to God.

And it was not so. The new steamers were much less manageable or navigable than the old creatures with paddles had ever been. The service was inefficient, inadequate, and unpunctual. There were no profits.

Yet it would be poltrooney and pessimism to assert that achievement is impossible. There is no sense in pointing to Paris and the Seine. The conditions are utterly different. Even a government department, without the hereditary instincts of a sea-faring race to aid it, might run successfully a service of passenger steamers on the Seine. To argue from this to an experiment with Thames is not more convincing than the assertion that cafés with tables set on boulevards will pay in London because they are successful in Paris. But there are more hopeful auguries.

Once upon a time steamers, with penny fares, did ply for hire on the Thames and made profits for private enterprise. This was, of course, before Transport was spelled with a capital, before Lord Ashfield had left America, before genius had transformed our hap-hazard facilities for getting from one place to another. But it was also before London had grown up, before the outer suburbs

claimed kinship with the city, before the "rush hours" had been dreamed of.

If we are caught between two stools of thought, that hesitancy may be forgiven. The burden of paying for a failure would indeed be intolerable; the hope of Thames steamers which, at the worst, "broke even" is almost imperishable. So in the end we should urge the Transport Board to have enough courage to make an experiment. If it fails they can blame the House of Commons.

### AN OPEN LETTER TO SIR LESLIE WILSON

[*"After all, cricket is only a game."*—Lt.-Col. Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, Governor of Queensland.—DAILY PAPER.]

Dear Sir Leslie,

I cannot for the life of me understand your claim

That "cricket after all is only a game."

No one who reads his paper nightly

Can possibly take cricket so lightly.

When grave men at opposite ends of the world sit round tables

And debate in secret as to the exact words to be used in cables,

And when one of the cables suggests that the friendly relations

Between two nations

May be unduly strained

If a certain type of bowling is maintained,

To call it "only a game"

Sounds to me preposterously tame.

When one day perhaps a contents-bill will plunge a whole nation

In despair with the words "ENGLAND'S DESPERATE SITUATION";

When possibly the following night

Another contents-bill will read "AUSTRALIA'S SORRY PLIGHT";

When all decent Englishmen are reading nothing except the reports from Hobbs and Bruce Harris,

And are getting up early to listen to the latest wireless news from Paris,

Then I say it is a crying shame

To belittle this important business by calling it a "game."

Only this morning coming up in the 9.10,

Sitting opposite me were two men

Who with fists clenched and eyes wildly rolling

Were fiercely quarrelling about this "leg theory bowling."

These men I happen to know have been friends all their lives,

Yet probably by to-night this quarrel will have extended to their wives.

No, Sir Leslie, call it a "Religion" if you like or even a "Disease,"

In fact call it what you please,

But in Heaven's name

Don't call it a "GAME"!

W. HODGSON BURNET.

# Russia

By Lord Monkswell

**I**N 1861 the Tsar abolished slavery in Russia. Less than sixty years later slavery was re-established in that country and there is no present sign that it is likely to be abandoned.

This is as striking an illustration as could be desired of the fact that a country gets the kind of government and political system which it deserves.

I have never been in Russia myself but I understand that practically the whole of the various native populations of that country are on so low an intellectual level and are so lacking in initiative that any attempt to give them control of their own destinies is bound to lead to immediate and hopeless breakdown. They are and must for centuries remain an easy prey to any kind of organised attempt to dominate them.

## *The Weak Moment*

For some centuries before the Great War this domination was exercised by an autocracy thoroughly representative of the Russian character but tonicked by blood from alien and more intelligent races. The autocracy, caught in a weak moment, showed that it possessed intelligence and competence insufficient to maintain its position when subjected to a severe external shock. As is the case of all weakened autocracies, corruption, selfishness and incompetence were dismal. The absolute power was broken with ludicrous ease and it became the simplest matter for any organised band of revolutionaries to seize the reins that had fallen from palsied hands.

Clearly the reason that the Bolsheviks were able to take control in Russia was that they were by far the most efficient organized body of people in the country, they knew what they wanted and they were prepared to go all lengths to secure it.

Russia being so immense and so decentralised a country it is very difficult even now to be sure how much hold the Bolsheviks have over the remoter districts, but there seems little doubt that their hold over the big centres and principal lines of communication is so firmly established that they are in little or no danger of being driven out by any internal revolt against them. The extreme difficulty of invading Russia makes them equally secure against external aggression, so that, so long as they do not quarrel excessively among themselves, there seems little prospect of the Bolshevik system collapsing.

Notoriously there are and always have been bitter quarrels among the Bolshevik leaders, but these have so far taken the form of personal struggles for power between individuals or disagreements about policy that have not been serious enough to split into factions the physical forces whereby the Bolsheviks maintain control of Russia, which themselves consist of a privileged military and official caste.

The first generation of revolutionaries always talks big. They take themselves very seriously

and do not recognise their advantages or their limitations. It was just the same in France. The French revolutionaries were always talking about their mission to spread their marvellous new ideas (mostly as old as the human race) all over the world. The result was the battle of Waterloo.

In somewhat the same way the Russian revolutionaries are convinced that the whole world is against them and that they must seek safety for themselves and survival for their ideas by imposing those ideas upon the whole world. It does not appear to occur to them that the world cares nothing for them or their ideas and would not think of molesting them if they would merely keep quiet. Neither do the Russian revolutionaries appear to grasp the extraordinary security of their own position. If they can contrive to avoid quarrelling with one another there is nothing that can touch them.

## *A Nation of Muddlers*

But for the present this is not enough for them. Like many megalomaniacs before them they are going to dominate the world, and they have a plan. The plan is to produce by the slave labour of their subject hordes so much of all the principal commodities and manufactures which the peoples of the world require that by underselling everybody in all the markets of the world they will be able to produce so much unemployment that chaos will everywhere supervene, and, in some unexplained manner, chaos will result in the establishment throughout the world of the Bolshevik system. Of course if everything works out as they wish the results aimed at will also follow. But it is hardly necessary to remark that the assumptions on which the Bolsheviks rely are extremely large assumptions. To begin with the Russians are and always have been a nation of muddlers and anything they have achieved has usually been achieved at enormous cost, e.g., in their various wars with the not particularly competent Turks they have won only by force of numbers. Next it must be remembered that slave labour is always inefficient labour and it is hardly conceivable that the more advanced nations with all their resources in capital and brains should really be so obliging as to allow a nation of incompetents to produce by inefficient slave labour, and then to flood the world's markets with, commodities that they have every facility for producing themselves in any volume they require without touching Russian products. And so on and so on.

On the other hand the Bolsheviks may be found to have a stranglehold on Russia. They may come to the real business of consolidating their own position in Russia and amassing for themselves large fortunes with which to found a series of new aristocratic families. Among the Bolsheviks who escape the persecution of their fellows we may still live to see the establishment of the lines of the Emperor Judas I, the Grand Duke Ananias, the Count Basheredin and Baron Skinemalivo.

# Economic Chaos and the Way Out

By J. F. Fraser-Tytler

THE prevalent theory that the world's economic difficulties can be cured by some adjustment of the monetary system is, I believe, erroneous. It is not the monetary system that requires adjustment *but the trade system*. Put the latter on a proper basis and the former will rectify itself.

The world is suffering from under-consumption caused partly by shortage of purchasing power and even more by its mal-distribution. Inflation will neither create new purchasing power nor do anything to distribute it to those who have none. Purchasing power can only be created by production, and can only be effectively distributed by means of a trade system which will guide production to a definite and assured market. The world's present system is based on Free Trade, of which Tariffs is only a clumsy modification. Everyone is at liberty to produce what he likes and sell it where he can, and the result is chaos. World trade to-day is far too vast and complicated to be thus left to its own devices. The world can never hope for real prosperity till distribution of commodities is systematically regulated so as to provide a sure market for production.

## The Home Market

It is obvious, to start with, that the most suitable market for any production is its own home market. There is no inherent virtue in International Trade for its own sake. The only true function of International Trade is to provide each country with goods produced by other countries which it does not produce itself. The first step then is to secure absolutely the home market of each country for its own producers, so far as they are capable of supplying it efficiently. The next step is the systematic regulation of the distribution of the surplus production of each country to other countries which may require it to supplement their own home production. In this the main essential is that goods must and can only be paid for by other goods or services or by investment. This principle, namely the exact balance of Exports and Imports is a *sine qua non*, the neglect of which is at the root of all our present troubles.

What we require then is a system of world trade which will ensure to each country an absolutely protected home market and the maintenance of an exact balance between its Imports and Exports. This can be done only by international co-operation to substitute for our present chaotic conditions regulation of distribution by an International Board of Trade. This would be a permanent body composed of representatives from each nation adopting the system. It would work in co-operation with the National Boards of Trade who in their turn would appoint councils representing both the producing and consuming sides of each separate trade.

Each National Board of Trade would each year prepare estimates, based on the previous year's trade returns, for the ensuing year showing: 1. The production of its Nation required for and consumed by the home market. 2. Its requirements for Import to supplement home production. 3. Its potential surplus for Export. 4. Its proposed Imports from and Exports to other countries. From the information in estimates 2 and 3 the International Board would prepare schedules showing the proposed distribution of Exports in accordance with Import requirements. They would give full consideration to estimate 4, filling gaps where necessary, and always maintaining the principle of an exact balance of Exports and Imports for each country. Invisible exports and capital investments would of course be included.

## Lines of Reconstruction

These Schedules would form the basis of the year's trade. They would be sent to each National Board who would publish them for the information of their traders and Customs authorities.

The whole World Trade System having thus been reduced to order, the way would be clear for the reconstruction of International Trade on the same lines. Would-be exporters would be at liberty to seek new markets abroad, providing they did not encroach on the preserves of the home producer. When a new demand had been created application would be made through the exporter's Board of Trade and the International Board to the Board of the Importing country for leave to export. This would be granted as soon as the International Board had arranged a balancing Import. Thus a system of mutual international advertisement would spring up. If say a German wished entry for his goods into England he would do his best to encourage the sale of English goods in Germany.

This system, of which I have tried to give a bare outline, would eliminate wasteful competition and guide production into the channels of maximum utility. It would draw out and develop production and consumption to their full extent. Adverse trade balances would be no more. Gold would be unnecessary. The currency of each country would find its own level and could be kept stable in terms of commodities. Unemployment would be immediately relieved and in time completely solved.

If your friends find difficulty in obtaining the *Saturday Review* from their newsgagents, ask them to send a postcard to The Publisher, *Saturday Review*, 18-20 York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.2.

# The Electric Eye

By Mark Barr, M.I.E.E.

WHEN light falls upon the retina of the human eye, an electric current is sent along the optic nerve. Dewar's experiment in 1873 showed this, and in the same year another discovery was made that led to the possibility of constructing an instrument which could see as men see.

It was found that a sort of metal retina could be made which governed an electric current—that is to say, allowed a large current to flow when the automatic retina saw a bright light and hardly any current when in the dark.

Later on, better eyes were devised—one in which no current flowed in the darkness and in which, when light fell upon it, there was an electric current of a strength in exact proportion to the brightness of the light. Indeed, the manufactured Robot eye has been so perfected that it can distinguish colours and their finest shades.

No one realised what miracles would come of the automatic metal eye—what incredible things it would do for us. It is a simple thing—a glass or quartz bulb in which half of the interior surface is coated with one of a certain family of metals, (the alkali elements, lithium, sodium, potassium, rubidium or calcium), and connected to an outside wire. And facing this retina of metal is a wire ring or open sieve which connects with a second outside wire. When light falls upon the metal retina a stream of electrons is ejected and thus an electric current flows from wire to wire across the vacuum.

In a jeweller's shop in Regent Street a deadly burglar trap is operated by one of these automatic eyes. In this case, beams of infra-red (*invisible light*) are directed across the doors and windows, and received by a metal retina especially sensitive to such light. A burglar passing into the building unknowingly intercepts the invisible beam and rings an alarm.

There is another kind, also in a Regent Street shop. In the window is a disc, and a passing policeman has only to shine his bull's eye upon it when all the electric lights in the shop are turned on by the current from the automatic eye which can see the policeman's beam! And when he turns his light away, the shop lights go out. There are thousands of variations, and the public will soon hear more of them. For fire protection, instead of waiting for an uncertain rise of temperature to ring an alarm or turn on sprinklers, an electric eye is now set to watch for flames.

Another modern contribution to electric wonders is now used in conjunction with the Robot eye. It is the magnification of tiny electric currents in perfect copy of every minutest quality and variation. Without this, Radio would be impossible. For how else could we be made to sense the incredibly small pulses of energy sent across the world? By this magnification we could start a great steamship by lighting a cigarette a quarter of a mile away.

Recently, in London, there was held an international meeting of experts to discuss the latest improvements in this wonderful device. The proceedings of the meeting make two hundred and thirty pages of difficult technical reading. Every bit of the story is told, historical, mechanical, mathematical and prophetic. Electric eyes for seeing infra-red and ultra violet rays and eyes for judging the quality of daylight and for measuring the beams of distant stars.

Dr. Fournier d'Albe has demonstrated the working of an instrument which reads to the blind—reads *any printed book*, not Braille type! A microscope scans the printed line, and five electric eyes give their jagged currents (as they see the varied forms of letters) to a telephone ear-piece. Of course the sound is not speech, but a series of different sounds which can be learnt as the alphabet is learnt, each one characteristic of the printed letter. In London, a girl (born blind) had learnt the new sonorous alphabet in eight months, and an ordinary printed book was put into d'Albe's instrument. She repeated the words in English as the kindly Robot read to her.

Last summer an expert spoke of coming triumphs, and he chose as example the future aeroplane in which an idle passenger rides without a pilot. Electric eyes in the plane watch the rivers and mountains, helped out by another instrument which tells of air currents, rains and heat and winds. These messages are sent by wireless from the plane to a pilot who sits on earth at a laboratory table and guides the plane.

Consider the Colour Matcher—a most accurate and delicate device. Women will tell you that the human eye is the final judge in colour matching, and indeed all measurements of hue were decided solely by the human eye until recently. But now a quadruple electric eye has been *adjusted according to the sight of famous colour-matching experts*, and it works with deadly certainty far better than the average person.

In the talking cinema film there is, down the margin, a band of variable shades of grey created by a microphone current which controls a strip of light. The microphone current is produced by the actor's voice. An electric eye scans the strip of variable shades, thus reproducing a magnified copy of the microphone current to operate a loud speaker.

We are bound to admit that in spite of the excess of new facilities in our complex life there are many of high value. The Radio saves lives at sea, and now the electric eye will watch the Lighthouse through an impenetrable fog. A ship lost in opaque vapours, unable to see a light two yards ahead, nor stars—unable to risk quarter-speed ahead, can now determine her position and follow her channel in safety. Imagine the horror of going back to the ships of William Hickey's day or to the days of the Plague.

# G. B. S.

I like him because . . .

BY ALPHA

WELL, there are so many reasons, and so disconnected with one another, that it is most difficult to know where to begin. But since one must begin somewhere, this will do as well as another reason: I like him just because he has a lot of disconnected qualities that differentiate him from other people. For one thing, G.B.S. is the best tempered man in the world. No one has ever seen him cross, and as most of us have our cross-grained moments (always of course more obvious in others than in ourselves), G. B. S. forms a pleasing exception to the rule. Yet, with him, this does not come from an easy or sluggish disposition: that really need not be said. G. B. S. is just as sparkling in good temper as other men in a rage.

And then G. B. S. is kind. There is hardly any length to the trouble he will take to oblige one who comes with enquiry or a request. Indeed many mistake this natural kindness for personal sympathy and are not a little surprised at the subsequent discovery that he does not care tuppence for them. This sounds a bit inhuman, and is so; but then there's such a lot of human, not to say humane, sentiment about, that it is really a relief to find a man with next to none.

Now this brings into relief another reason why I like G. B. S.: you can study in him the workings of intellect divorced from emotion, or nearly so. Mr. Shaw's intellect has fairly obvious limitations and therefore forms a subject all the more accessible. His achievements are largely intellectual, his mistakes and his ignorance are almost wholly intellectual, nay, his very emotions are intellectual. To the best of my belief he has only one streak of pure emotion, and an odd one it is for a man professing to be a Communist (here's my first point again): it is a marked streak of religious emotion. And this is yet another proof how important a part emotion plays in life, for the only plays in which G. B. S. properly grips and shakes his audience are those in which he can let his religious feelings off the leash, as for instance in *The Showing-up of Blanco Posnet*, *Major Barbara*, and *Saint Joan*. If only G.B.S. had some personal emotion besides, what a fine dramatist he might have been!

There is another reason too why I like G. B. S., and that is that he is one of those very few people who take an interest in the question whether authors are paid and in general get a square deal from publishers, theatrical managers, movie magnates and the public. The amount of work that Mr. Shaw has put into this matter in the course of his career is stupendous and has been really fruitful; and this is a reason why everyone who lives to whatever extent by quill-driving or, rather, tapping his typewriter should like G. B. S. in a degree surpassing any possible causes of dislike. G. B. S., the man without emotion, is the champion of lost causes, lost ideals, lost knowledge (because he can never get it), and even authors lost to all practical sense. As one of them, I like him for that too.

I dislike him because . . .

BY OMEGA

C LAD in a hairshirt of prickly woollens, eating monkeynuts and drinking water, he passes through the world with an air of virtuous rectitude, which he would have us take for independence. He has proclaimed the gospel of a change of values and challenged all that tradition and morality held respectable, but no one has been more of a slave to tabus, to those odd superstitions which claim reason for their father, though they are the children of fear. He belongs to that class of ascetics who abstain from experience because he is afraid of life.

Starting as an iconoclast, he has become an "icon" himself. Long ago, by dint of being conceited and disagreeable, he set himself up as a leader of rebellion. His later life has proved that his conceit was really an inferiority complex and his unpleasantness hid a pathetic eagerness to be well thought of. Sometimes he must feel penitent when he remembers the part he played in that Fabianism which produced the melancholy lucubrations of Lord Passmore: perhaps he grinds his teeth at the thought of "the inevitability of gradualness." My dislike for G.B.S. could go no further than to condemn him to listen to all Lord Passmore's speeches.

He has made the best of both worlds and that is a success which is no passport to affection. Now that he travels in two motor cars, something rings a little false in his Socialism, though he is rich in reasons of justification. In that guide to Socialism which he wrote for women, he discovered that the artist must be in a class apart and enjoy special treatment. One suspects that in a Communist state the author of "*Candida*" would make sure that his claims were not overlooked.

There must be many who will never forgive him certain portions of *Methuselah* when he inflicted on them the flaying torture of boredom. I have a melancholy recollection of a torrent of words, poured forth by actors with the memories of calculating machines, which flowed on unceasingly with no apparent meaning, though welcome sleep was regularly chased from the listener's eyes by a staccato phrase that sounded as if it ought to mean something.

Mr. Shaw's worship of efficiency is a cold substitute for that religion which his black girl failed to find. He would have us believe that happiness comes from without, that it is having something and not being something, and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost. In the conflict between emotion and intellect, intellect has won its Pyrrhic victory.

However to-day Mr. Bernard Shaw is *vieux jeu*. The sticks he used to throw at the Aunt Sallies of the past are coming his way now and no one takes him very seriously. Wit he has in abundance and too much of it, but he remains singularly inhuman like everyone else who has tried to make a religion of Humanity *sub specie mortalitatis*.

# Some Secrets of Bird Flight

By "Barnacle"

IT is unfortunately too true that one can seldom walk far along a main road in the country without coming across the corpse of some small bird that has been killed by a motor car. If the remains are fairly intact, it is well worth while examining the details of the design of the wings before depositing the pathetic little bundle in some quieter resting place, for in these details lies the secret of flight. Until quite recently, the reason for the peculiar variations of design in different birds remained a baffling mystery and served us solely as an aid in classification, but now, with knowledge and experience gained in actual human flight at our disposal, we can solve many of these riddles.

One of the most surprising secrets lies in a little group of feathers known as the bastard wing. Its chief claim to attention is the close resemblance in form, action, and effect to the famous Handley Page slotted wing which is generally acknowledged to have done more towards making aeroplanes safe than any other invention. Whereas others have tended only to increase speed, the slotted wing has definitely lowered the minimum speed at which aeroplanes can be flown with safety. This seems to be such a desirable attribute that, if some good fairy decides to present a cup to replace the Schneider Trophy, it is to be hoped that he, or she, will give it for a tortoise race, for the encouragement of yet slower flight.

Curiously enough, we do not owe a debt of gratitude to whoever really did invent the slotted wing (there is some doubt on the point) for copying it from the slots in birds' wings and adapting the design for human use, but rather for designing it to meet certain known requirements, and developing it by trial and error. The device was only detected in birds after it had been produced in aeroplanes. To quote Mr. Handley Page's own words: "A deal of time and trouble would have been saved had we known earlier that birds have slots in their wings."



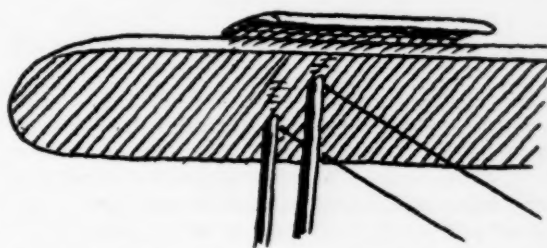
THE UPPER SURFACE OF A PIGEON'S WING, SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE BASTARD WING.

Owing to its small size in such birds as can be picked up on a road, the bastard wing is not easily detected in their wings by an unpractised eye, so it is best, as a beginning, to seek it in the bigger birds which we use for food, such as pheasants and pigeons. These, having heavy bodies for the size

of their wings, find that slow flight is not easy, and so are provided by Nature with relatively large slots. These birds also have the merit of being on show at the local fishmonger's shop any day of the week.

The best way to locate the bastard wing is to spread the main wing, and then look for a slip of feathers (about 3 inches long in a pheasant and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in a pigeon) which lies on the top of the wing, just behind the front edge, and about half-way between the roots of the main flight feathers and the joint where the wing bends back when folded. It can be distinguished from the other feathers by the fact that it can be made, with a pencil or other suitable object, to swing forwards and upwards until there is a gap between it and the parent wing. This gap is the all-important slot.

It does not look very important, but it is probable that were the bastard wing removed from a living bird of the type that has large slots the next flight



THE SLOT OPEN IN AN AEROPLANE WING.



THE SLOT OPEN IN A HERON'S WING. SKETCHED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

would end in a crash. The experiment has not, as far as I know, been carried out.

The purpose of the slot in the wings of a bird or aeroplane is not easily explained without going rather deeply into the theory of flight, but briefly it may be said that, when open, the slot traps a part of the stream of air which flows over the top of a wing, squeezes it, and causes it to flow as a jet of high pressure air close over the upper surface. In doing this, it smooths out any eddies which may tend to form there. Such eddies are the arch enemies of the aviator and are responsible for many crashes. They are always likely to form on the top of an unslotted wing when it is used at the

large angles necessary for slow flight. Little warning is given that they are beginning to form, and when they do the resulting loss of "lift" in the wing is sudden, and sometimes disastrous.



END-ON VIEW OF THE EDDIES FORMING ON A WING USED AT TOO GREAT AN ANGLE.



END-ON VIEW OF A SLOTTED WING SHOWING HOW THE EDDIES ARE SMOOTHED OUT.

Hence the very real need for the slot to smooth them out.

Judging by its size in birds, the effect of the slot is surprisingly great. It is not much bigger relatively in many types of aeroplanes, and in these it is very effective. The explanation is that air is a very elastic substance, and air-streams (simply the currents of air flowing past a wing owing to its motion) are consequently affected over a large area by any obstacle, such as a slot, placed in their path. The best way to envisage these streams is to think of air as being a very, very thin and elastic form of treacle. Such a substance would behave in exactly the same manner. With that in mind it is easier to understand how it is that the short slot in a bird's wing, which at its largest is only three-tenths of the main wing, can have so great an effect. Not only does it smooth out the air-streams passing directly through it, but also those passing near.

An attractive detail about this particular form of slot is that when a fledgling bird first leaves the nest, the bastard wing is the only part of its flying equipment that is fully developed. It is somehow extremely cheering, at any rate to those who have experienced the terrors of the "first solo" flight in an aeroplane, to think that the young hopeful, on taking that first awful plunge, is equipped with full-sized safety gear in his weak and untried wings.

## Wines Beyond Compare

By H. WARNER ALLEN

IN the aristocracy of great wines there is no name more noble than that of Château Lafite. It is the perfection of Médoc. Margaux and Latour have their special excellencies, but Lafite possesses all the qualities of Claret in the balance that is perfect art. How Plato would have loved a fine pre-phylloxera Lafite, if only the laws of time had permitted him to enjoy it. For it is not only the model of poise and equilibrium which is the shadow of justice, but it attains that glow of poesy which brings down to earth the shadow of the supreme good.

In the last twenty years before phylloxera, that glorious swan-song of the greatest Médocs, Lafite stands almost unrivalled among the first growths, which poured forth their harmonies in defiance of the despicable insect from America which was to ruin the best vineyards of the world. I had feared that these wines had now become no more than a memory, but I have been happily disillusioned by a Claret dinner to which I was invited by my friends Mr. C. W. Berry and Mr. Rudd.

The wines came from the cellar described not so long ago in the *Saturday Review* and I have never known, or dreamed of, a more wonderful gallery of Lafites.

First, a magnum of Lafite 1862. We hoped for little from this; for 1862 was an off vintage that should surely be dead at the age of 71. Yet it was perfectly sound: a bit decrepit no doubt, its sugar with last year's snows, but still a very gallant old gentleman who spurred expectation for the greater who were to follow.

Then came a Jeroboam or rather a Tappit Hen of Lafite 1865, a Gargantuan bottle that might have quenched the thirst of Polyphemus, for it held seven and a half of those puny bottles from which ordinary mortals drink. Wine in such a royal container matures royally and defies old age. That 1865 was the revelation of the evening; for it glowed with all the colours of a Venetian sunset and its majesty was worthy of an Imperial diadem. Here were no signs of age, no weakening, no cynical dotage of bitterness. Full of vigour, with the sweetness of health and strength in the pride of its glory, it fulfilled the purpose of its existence as only the bravest wines can.

After it a magnum of 1868 was sorely handicapped. What at so great an age can two bottles do against seven and a half; yet by itself that 1868 would have been a connoisseur's delight. There followed a magnum of Lafite 1864, the wine that I have called the Platonic idea of Claret. There was never a Claret year to equal 1864. It stood up to the trial magnificent, still in possession of all its powers, yet let it be whispered that the memory of the 1865 made one wonder to what impossible dream of perfection it might have carried us, if it too had lived its life in the magnificent environment of a Tappit Hen.

This tale of lovely Clarets ended with an ideal Brandy, Grande Fine Champagne, 1858 which, unrefreshed by newer spirit, filled the world with a mist of golden perfume.

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## SHORT STORY

## The Perfect Day

By Simon Raw

THAT day, of all the days that ever were or ever would be, was to be the perfect day—the sort of day, you know, that comes only once in a lifetime.

I felt it in my bones as I woke; there seemed even to be a conspiracy afoot to make it so. Absurd? Of course—but, after all, there was just that faint touch of Spring in the air. Too soon, no doubt; but it made you feel ridiculously fit—and the breakfast coffee, for once, was exactly as it should be.

There were none of the usual bills beside the usual bacon. No; but that cheerful ass Smedley, who had borrowed a fiver that mad evening—how many years ago now—had unaccountably remembered it, and still more unaccountably sent it back by cheque, with an idiotic Limerick about procrastinations and the Statute of Limitations.

Then, too, Muggins, my old and only Muggins, with whom there had been a passing breeze, had accepted my invitation to lunch that day at the club, so that the hatchet would be buried.

And better far than Muggins, the One Perfect Woman, after one of those unaccountable silences that may presage good or ill or may (God having made women what they are) mean nothing at all, had suddenly asked herself to tea that afternoon at the flat.

Work and duty? To the devil with both. This day, of all days that ever were, was the perfect day.

\* \* \* \*

There was a bright February sun, with just that proper touch of frost in the air which made the very smell of the Hampstead Tube seem an insult and an iniquity. No; time (and Tubes) were made for slaves—the free man walks.

Haverstock Hill is certainly the pleasantest way into London, and if Chalk Farm is a trifle slummy, after all, even on one's own perfect day, it takes all sorts to make a world.

Perhaps it was not quite such good going as I came through Camden Town. The frost turned to damp, the sun hid behind a mist, and at Euston the fog began.

In gloomy Gower Street it lifted a little; towards Bedford Row it was thick again, and then thicker still. Oddly, though, it did not seem to matter. The traffic slowed—it always does in fog, of course, but now it seemed slower even than usual.

And then I realised with a start that it was I who was going faster than usual. Rather strange that, because as a rule I am a little over-cautious in a fog, but somehow this one did not seem to touch one's eyes or throat at all. Then, too, one felt so ridiculously well, and probably it would be clear again by Pall Mall.

Actually it was thicker than ever there—a dense, heavy blanket. I was not sorry to turn in at the door of the Junior Reform.

\* \* \* \*

Better cash a cheque now before Muggins (why should one of the cleverest fellows in London have the absurd name of Muggins?) came to lunch. It would save time afterwards.

I called at the hall-porter's hutch for the club cheque-book. The man did not seem to hear. Curious, that—he had always seemed so alert; had the fog affected his senses at all?

These things do happen, even with the best of servants, so I called again for the book. But then Muggins came in and made for the hutch to ask if I had arrived.

A pity that—these meetings after a squabble should be elaborately casual, with just that trifle of calculated nonchalance that conveys everything and means nothing. Yet here was Muggins, five minutes early as usual: he never had any tact, damn him.

He had none now, for he looked straight at me, without even the proper propitiatory grin of reconciliation (after all, I made the first move). This was going to be uncomfortable, this lunch. What the devil made me ask him?

And then an absolutely unaccountable thing happened. He had asked the hall-porter if I were in, and the hall-porter had given the stereotyped reply before I suddenly realised that Muggins must have walked right through me. Blast him, this was more than lack of tact—you don't do that sort of thing, in a man's club or out of it.

And then, I suppose, I began to understand. Something more was amiss than tactlessness from Muggins; something had happened to me.

I threw my mind back a little. The hall-porter had not heard me . . . The people in the fog (how slowly they walked) had not seemed to see me . . . Was there a fog at all? Or . . . and then it came in a flash.

Death . . . the perfect day that comes only once in a lifetime.

Somewhere in Bedford Square it must have happened—at any rate that was where they found my body, and it was there, I recollected, that that miraculous feeling of lightness had come over me, and one seemed to float for a moment and then pass quickly through the fog of life that held the others in its grip.

\* \* \* \*

Muggins, of course, knew nothing of this. Probably he waited about and fussed a little, cursed me for not turning up or telephoning, and then went to the R.A.C. and paid for his own lunch.

As for the One Perfect Woman, she was still waiting for her tea when somehow I found myself back at the flat that afternoon. I thought—in fact I hoped—she looked a little sad and pensive as she bent over something on the table by the fire.

But it was only Smedley's cheque she was looking at.

## Music and Musicians By Herbert Hughes

**D**URING the past week we have had two very good examples of what may be done in the name of art by sound commercial propaganda. "Plug" a piece of bad music in or out of the theatre hard enough and it will achieve, and maintain, notoriety until presently it dies its natural death. Tell the world that the Léner String Quartet is incomparable, and the legend will persist until the inevitable *decrescendo* sets in. Advertise the magnetism of Herr Furtwängler hot and strong and people will accept him as the greatest musical personality in Europe. Say over and over again that Herr Schönberg is a great master, that "he has won a secure position," that in Germany the controversy over his work is "practically over," and the impressive statements will remain impressive until you discover that they mean very nearly nothing. (Those blocks of unoccupied seats in Queen's Hall last week when the Master was conducting his Variations were eloquent of a dying legend.)

People will believe anything, even of patent medicines, until the next thing turns up. Take this Léner group. Expressiveness manicured to the point of being flawless has been the outstanding characteristic of the Budapest players for some years past. It is a characteristic firmly based on a false principle—that of a servile devotion at all times and in all places to their chosen leader, who must remain pre-eminent. It seems to me to have become intensified with the passing years. They have not understood that the kind of pre-eminence they idealise is the negation of good quartet-playing.

### Famous Dissonances

In their opening concert they chose the C major Quartet of Mozart (K. 465), the posthumous A minor (Op. 132) of Beethoven, and the Quartet for Oboe and Strings in F major, also of Mozart. That C major Quartet, wonderful enough otherwise, is notable for the dissonances in its first movement which threw a certain princely patron of music into a rage, and has been the subject of critical commentary ever since. Here the pre-eminent M. Jenő Léner was so absorbed in his leadership and in the manipulation of an unnecessary tremolo that he succeeded in practically wiping out the dissonant effects Mozart had aimed at. M. Léner's absorption in leadership was continued so triumphantly through the Beethoven that the individual life of the inner parts was too often left to the imagination. There was unanimity (of the servile kind), and the fiddling, as such, was good; but the performance, judged as an interpretation of Beethoven's text, was one of the worst I have ever listened to.

In the Mozart the natural leadership is handed over to the oboe, and as the executant was Léon Goossens, the performance here was utterly beyond reproach. In the other works I should have much preferred to hear the Brosa, the Kutcher, or the London String Quartet, though even these would,

I imagine, submit the homage of their respect to the old Flonzaley of blessed memory.

### Furtwängler and the Berliners

Herr Furtwängler with his Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra presented the second very good example this week of what may be done by the right kind of hypnotic propaganda. There is no more magnificent machine in Europe to-day than the orchestra he commands; none, indeed, in the same class anywhere on the continent. He has so worked his will upon it that it now obeys the least flicker of his eyelids and the serious, well-dressed audiences that go to Queen's Hall naturally marvel at the unanimity, the precision, the tone—the whole bag of tricks. They marvel, of course, not at musicianship, but at the merest pot-hooks of musicianship.

Herr Furtwängler is no charlatan. He is a musician, but his musicality is so mixed with personal vanity and mountebankery of the sort associated with the stage since time immemorial that the conglomerate qualities have resulted in a definitely inferior personality. This inferiority has set him improving Beethoven in a way that imposes on all but really musical people. He gets away with it only by a cynical perception of the limits to which he may go. He took few liberties with the First Symphony, and the general effect was Beethovenish and charming. But he let himself go in the *Coriolan* and showed us what Beethoven ought to have done with the *Eroica* if only the poor old composer had had the courage of other people's convictions. A passage that Beethoven was content to mark *piano* loses its significance unless it is played *pianissimo*. This "second subject" does not get across unless it is taken *meno mosso* and the wood-wind of the Berliners heard in all their exquisite beauty.

Thus Furtwängler with Beethoven. Thus is a fine orchestra dragooned. Thus is our not-very-musical public pleasantly hoodwinked. Thus can most enterprises succeed if the propaganda is on sound commercial lines and insidious enough to appeal to those who like to think they know what they like and hope they like the right thing.

### "A BOY-AND-GIRL AFFAIRE"

When I look back upon a boy who lay

Once with his mad head on a girl's pale breast,  
And think how, then, he dreaded each new day

Unless its night brought him her lips, or lest  
Some deed of his her delicate love should slay

And leave him desert-empty, uncaressed,

To face the dark alone—no more to play

Or flirt with dalliance at her behest—

I wonder how young love could give such pain,

And whether that dim face was really You . . .

And was that fool this careless, callous Me?

So many other fiercer loves have lain

Cradled within our hearts . . .

Yet none so true,

And none so pure with white, ecstatic glee!

April 1931.

HUGH LONGDEN.

## NEW NOVELS

Reviewed by ANNE ARMSTRONG

- Better Think Twice About It.* By Luigi Pirandello. Short Stories. Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.  
*Outside Eden.* By J. C. Squire. Short Stories. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.  
*King Carnival.* By J. C. Moore. Short Stories. Dent. 7s. 6d.  
*Sealed Door of Love.* By Pamela Wynne. Philip Allan. 7s. 6d.  
*Second-Hand Wife.* By Kathleen Norris. Murray. 7s. 6d.

THEY are always the valiant who spend themselves in the writing of short stories. Because the short story is the most difficult and exhausting form of creative expression; and because to write it is, for the most part, sheer altruism.

And what should a short story be like? Briefly, like something. It may take a thousand forms; but any one of the forms must include a beginning, a middle and an end which, like the pull of an oar, uses the water to propel the boat. And it should have a meaning. And if it cannot have very much meaning it must have a punch, the sort of punch that brings a knock-out blow by the second or, at the latest, the third round.

There are, obviously, few people who can do this sort of thing well enough to matter and, since they can do it, they can also do other things which are held to matter more and which bring much more enticing rewards. Thus they, the short stories, deserve what is often denied to them, the decent compliment of grateful consideration.

Here before me, then, are three volumes of short stories and the authors are as different in character and metal as one form of short story may be from another. First, I suppose, comes Luigi Pirandello, because that is a name with which the round world of letters conjures. Pirandello the playwright is known to all England; he is appreciated at the Athenaeum, exalted in the suburbs. Pirandello the writer of short stories is rather different, though he remains metaphysical and still is blind to the realities of what is, for him, a non-existent world. He, at least, is new, and the suburbs will cling to him whatever the Athenaeum, which reads Italian, may think in somnolence.

There is tragedy and there is comedy in "Better Think Twice About It." But the tragedy is tinged with comedy and the comedy more than faintly coloured with tragedy. It is as though Pirandello stands at the cross-roads; one way leads to happiness; the other to sorrow—and yet it matters little which way you choose. The most striking are the two that come first. "Better Think Twice About It" is definitely planned on Maupassant lines, but in "The Other Son" it is difficult to know whether Pirandello was laughing or near tears when he wrote it.

But is our own, our native J. C. Squire of any less moment? Not at all, I think, either to the suburbs or to the Athenaeum. He is also the master of other forms of self-expression who gives

us largesse in rare volumes of stories—not, like Pirandello, after the order of Maupassant but by a model which he, too, with his amazing bonhomie has made his own. All the stories in "Outside Eden" are evidence of his inimitable good-humour. I loved the story of the man who wouldn't take the tips that were given him and then at the end, having sworn that the money is on the horse, and having won, has to pay host to the tune of fifty odd pounds. It is, perhaps, sad that he could have won two thousand pounds, but J. C. Squire isn't bothered about that—and how damnably funny to have to pretend that he has won it! A Prohibitionist England seen through a Journalist's eyes, an imaginary character in a novel who comes to life and demands damages for libel, Professor Cubbit's discovery that Bacon did, after all, write Shakespeare, and so on from fun to fun. A simply delightful book which the short story lover should not fail to miss.

And following on, and climbing still, in the direct succession of mastery, is Mr. J. C. Moore, that still joyous and attractive young man who can write English so well that his close, clear vision of men, women and motives comes to us as it came to him. Is it audacious to put Mr. Moore on the same book-shelf as Squire and Pirandello or Pirandello and Squire? And why should it be? They are there. Mr. Moore is still on the way, and it may be in him to go even nearer to the Tors of achievement. His "King Carnival" is a little bit of everything. Not yet with the polish of Squire nor with the depths of Pirandello, but short stories to be read; read and loved. I have not the space to go through all the stories, but "The Tea-Party" was perhaps the best and "Things" the least successful.

And now for quite different fare. Just as every author is not highbrow there are still readers who can enjoy a melodramatic love story. This does not imply criticism of the writer nor of the taste of the reader. Sunflowers are beautiful gaudy things but there are times when the celandine seems far more beautiful and just as satisfying; and yet again, *vice versa*. Miss Pamela Wynne's "Sealed Door of Love" is certainly a love story, and it is certainly melodramatic. Diana Tarrant falls in love with her employer's nephew whilst they are all on the Riviera. The nephew is ordered to India with his regiment, Diana returns to her home and discovers she is to have a baby. It is from there but a short step to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, and from there to the terrible Convent of the St. Maria Della Francesca. Horror upon horror piles up for the luckless Diana, until the nephew arrives in the nick of time and they escape from the convent.

"Second Hand Wife," by Kathleen Norris, is of very much the same family. An unhappily married man, his beautiful secretary, a perfect devil of a wife, adventures following adventures until the unhappily married man becomes happily married to the secretary and the very devil of a wife is confounded. Again, and provided you are not feeling very highbrow at the time of reading, quite good fun.

### The Bonny Prince's Daughter

*Charlotte Stuart, Duchess of Albany.* By F. J. A. Skeet. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 16s. net.

**T**RAVELLERS in the south of France who visit the museum of that lovely university town, Montpellier, are astonished to find there an exceptionally fine collection of pictures. They came to the town from Fabre, the 18th century painter, who had them from his mistress the Countess of Albany, formerly the wife of Charles Edward the Young Pretender, whom Major Skeet in this able "Life and Letters" persists loyally in calling Charles III of England, and it is possible that some at least had been in his possession and were annexed by his wife when she ran away from him with Alfieri the Piedmontese poet. Adherents of the White Rose League may thus play with the fancy that they are beholding the last remains of the Royal picture gallery.

Among the portraits at Montpellier is one of Charlotte, Duchess of Albany, the subject of Major Skeet's memoir, who was Charles Edward's natural daughter by Miss Clementina Walkinshaw, whom he met at Glasgow after the retreat from Derby. Clementina was, Major Skeet suggests, the "Black Eye" of the Prince's toasts. The two extant portraits of her show a brilliant dark young woman with a deal of what would now be called "it" in her make-up. She followed her royal lover abroad, quarrelled violently with him, compromised his attempts to get support from Continental Courts, was beaten by him, fled from him, and passed the remainder of a most unhappy life vainly begging for a reconciliation.

It was not until twenty-three years later that Bonnie Prince Charlie, no longer bonnie, but ill, fat, lethargic, living in Florence under the official style of the Count of Albany, abandoned by his frivolous wife, Louise of Stolberg, bethought himself of his daughter Charlotte, existing meanly in a convent in Paris, recognised her, created her Duchess of Albany and summoned her to him. Charlotte—Burns' "Bonnie Lass of Albany"—inherited much of the best, and none of the worst, qualities of the Stuart stock. She was patient, prudent, agreeable, diplomatic; she succeeded remarkably in effecting a reconciliation not only between herself, but between her father, and his younger brother the Cardinal of York; she conferred a sort of dignity to the last four years of Charles Edward's life that had long been absent from it; and during the two years of her own life after her Cardinal uncle had succeeded to the shadowy Stuart claims became favourably known in Italy as "la Reale Nipote."

It is an interesting speculation whether, had Charlotte lived, she might in any degree have affected the course of history; but she died at the age of 36 of cancer of the liver. It is in any case certain that the document by which Charles Edward professed to legitimate his daughter was void at law of whatever land. The Duchess of Albany thoroughly merited a serious biography and that written by Major Skeet is worthy of its subject.

### Patriarchal

*Fragments: Educational and Other.* By Sir Philip Magnus, Bt. Daniel. 6s.

**W**HEN Sir Philip Magnus was born, the University of London was in its infancy, and he was closely associated with it from 1834, when he went to University College School, until he retired from Parliament in 1922, having been its Burgess since 1906. A long and honourable period of service to look back upon, for much has happened since Oxford and Cambridge opposed the claim of the nascent University to grant degrees. In this volume Sir Philip has collected a few of the loaves which he has cast upon the waters from time to time; and if, contrary to the practice of nature, they have returned to him rather dry, there is much that is still readily digestible. Here, for example, is a pious tribute to his first headmaster, Hewitt Key, who was far in advance of the ideas of his time.

Sir Philip was at a lecture in Berlin in 1866 when a excited student brought news of the attempt on Bismarck's life by young Blind. "God forgive him," the student cried, "for missing him." But perhaps the most readable, in spite of its erudition, is a paper on the book of Jonah, whose unique adventure has kept his name alive in every nursery. The writer refers to all the various explanations, and inclines to the theory that the whole story is a later interpolation. But most of us, if we cannot keep our whale, will insist on being allowed at least a great fish "very like a whale." And not all the higher critics combined will convince any right-minded child that Jonah's gourd was really a castor-oil plant.

### The French Capital

*The Waiting City.* By Helen Simpson. George G. Harrap. 12s. 6d. net.

**L**OUIS Sebastien Mercier, pamphleteer, author, and Conventionnel, was by profession a quarrel: he quarreled with everybody from the reign of Louis XV to that of Napoleon, was in exile in Switzerland before the Revolution, imprisoned by Robespierre during it, and must be thought extremely lucky not to have died in prison or on the scaffold at some point in his excitable career. He owed his life to wit and an adroitness that warned him never to make a completely false step, and left a monumental proof in his work "Le Tableau de Paris" that describes life and manners in the French capital before the Revolution at the length of two thousand chapters and over half a million words.

Miss Helen Simpson, a descendant of Boissy d'Anglas, the President of the Convention, renders a great service to students, as well as to the reading public generally, by now making accessible the pith of Mercier's unwieldy work in a handsome volume set off with contemporary illustrations of Paris in the 1780's.

The task of reducing so cumbrous a mass to reasonable proportions must have been great, and

so must be our gratitude to Miss Simpson who has produced a charmingly readable book, in which the excerpts from Mercier are much improved by her own learned and lively notes.

Here we may read why actresses were the first class of women to wear drawers, how *la grippe* was invented as a slang name for the then prevalent influenza that so many people imagine to be a modern invention; that the traffic problem was just as acute under Louis XVI as under the Third Republic; that girls just out of school were already beginning to go about unchaperoned; that the art of eating had degenerated (it always has); that the fashionable thing was to be ruined and so say loudly (it still is), and of dresses, drugs, lampoons, doctors, kisses, and a host of entertaining subjects and oddities that often make one feel the 18th century strangely close to our own. Everyone may find something in Mercier to interest and entertain him.

Miss Simpson deserves our thanks as well as our congratulations. Hers is a book that should have lasting success.

### Aerial Battle

*Death in the Air: The War Diary and Photographs of a Flying Corps Pilot.* William Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

THIS very remarkable book has already appeared in serial form and has excited wide comment. It consists of extracts from the diary of a very ordinary and not insensitive young man in France. The photographs, actually taken during aerial battles with enemy machines in the clouds, are superb. The book bears the stamp of authenticity. Here is a very real, very thrilling and intensely human story. The drama is unfolded day by day, almost hour by hour. There are no heroics. When a pilot does not return, there is gloom in camp and short, staccato entries in the diary. "*Things not too rosy to-night.*" So-and-so has gone. It is a pity. A friend of the author's called Canada failed to return to the squadron and was believed dead. A day or two later, a German pilot dropped a note over British lines to say that Canada was well and a prisoner and wanted "*Toothbrush, razor, some clothes and soap.*" These were dropped over the German lines "*also with second package of cigarettes for German Squadron. One of the officers picked it up . . . saluted and waved to Mick.*"

Here is another incident. The author, in the middle of an air dual, waves to the German pilot, who cheerfully waves back. Then, manœuvring for position, the author shoots the German pilot to bits. "*All seems bloody futile.*"

The War in the air, seen through the eyes of this young pilot, was nothing more or less than a terribly exciting game played between two sides. If you played the game well, the other man was killed. If he played it better, you were killed. The tragedy of the book lies in the fact that there was no satisfaction in either result but only sadness.

JERRARD TICKELL.

### Two French Books

Among the most interesting books to Englishmen recently published in France are "*De Bismarck à Poincaré*," by M. Raymond Recouly (Les Editions de France, Frs.30), and "*Le Mur Mitoyen*" (Plon, Frs.12), by Comte Serge Fleury.

M. Recouly, well known by his remarkable "*Mémorial de Foch*" and many other political and historical studies, does not write of England save incidentally. That M. Recouly's judgments are not always favourable to the foreign policy pursued by Downing Street only makes them in the main the more valuable. Without a working knowledge of many of the facts dealt with by M. Recouly we can have no respectable foreign policy at all.

Regarded from the English standpoint, the most striking part of M. Recouly's work is his demonstration of the gradual change in the European situation until the Anglo-French entente of 1904 arose just in time to save Europe from becoming a diplomatic province for the Wilhelmstrasse and paved the way for successful resistance to Germany in 1914. M. Recouly shows by the plainest evidence how control of German foreign policy came to be overwhelmingly influenced by Austro-Hungarian ambition in the Balkans and the foreign offices of Berlin and Vienna fell under the domination of the plans long matured by the German and Austrian general staffs. Europe was saved—this is the upshot of M. Recouly's analysis of the facts—from German hegemony by Anglo-French co-operation between 1904 and 1914. The lesson to be drawn is that, due consideration being given to German foreign policy of the present day, no other safety is in view than policy in England and France based upon the same firm ground.

Count Serge Fleury's work, in a different way, is no less important to the English reader. His "*Mur Mitoyen*" is the Channel, and his object is, by a comparison and a contrast of the nations on either side of it, to improve our understanding of one another. In a study no less penetrating than sympathetic Comte Fleury, who has the advantage (at least for the task of writing of England) of being a Cambridge man, describes us to his compatriots. His style is delightful, and his knack of hitting off our virtues as well as our foibles pleasant in a high degree. He speaks with truth of "the amusing incomprehension" of one another in which French and English find themselves at first and of the solid friendship that often succeeds it.

"*Le Mur Mitoyen*" forms a charming mirror held up to our face, witty without being caustic and gay without levity. On the French side of the party wall Comte Fleury is specially good on the family, peasants, and the army. He is equally good on both in his final chapter, entitled "*The Station Porter*," whether he be at the Gare du Nord or at Victoria. "*Le Mur Mitoyen*," though in lighter vein, is as much worth serious English attention as M. Recouly's important contribution to our understanding of grave matters.

*Life in a Soviet Factory.* By Lili Körber. John Lane. 5s.

**F**RAULEIN Körber went to Russia to work in the Putilov factory at Leningrad and has put her impressions into a very vivacious account, well translated from the German by Mr. Claud W. Sykes. Apart from the vivacity and personal sketches her account does not contain anything of remarkable value, unless it is an unconscious testimony to the fact that, under the inspiration of the Five Year Plan, all enthusiasm in Russia is being turned into a devastating worship of machinery centred upon the tractors that are, in fact, giving such a hopelessly poor result in stimulating Russian agriculture.

It is the knowledge of the disparity between the results obtained and this factitious enthusiasm that makes Fraulein Körber's excited interest in her experiences seem somewhat childish. One would imagine from her that the Putilov works were a creation of the Soviets, whereas in reality they employed up to 20,000 men before the war, and that really skilled work never existed before in Russia, whereas the Russian skilled workman of old was often an admirable type. Fraulein Körber intersperses her tale with many anecdotes of cruelty and injustice under the imperial régime, but is naturally silent about the far worse state of Russia generally to-day.

## Novels in Brief

*The English Family Robinson.* By D. L. Murray. Constable. 7s. 6d.

Here is an omelette light but sustaining in the best modern manner. The retired head of an Oxford College, established, with wife, two undergraduates daughters and a son at Charterhouse, in a small country house perhaps in Sussex, suddenly finds himself penniless; and the thread of the story shows us the family's method of meeting the crisis. Poultry-farming, horse-coping and marriage are the three roads to success.

High-spirited and amusing with an undercurrent of sound sense, and of course admirably well written. No one who has enjoyed the Irish R.M. or George Birmingham (in his better moments) should miss this excellent tonic.

*Chocolate.* By A. Tarasov-Rodinov. Translated by A. Malamuth. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

This book may be recommended to all who are suffering from an excess of high spirits. It should promptly convert the mood of wildest hilarity into a state of inspissated gloom. It opens as a book about Soviet Russia should, with a gang of prisoners waiting to be shot and concludes with Zudin, the head of the local Cheka, going out to face a firing party, because his children have accepted some sticks of chocolate from an anti-Revolutionary. Presumably its author is a convinced Bolshevik and he writes with remarkable power. The nightmare he describes suggests the worship of the God of cruelty and hatred. Class-war is Zudin's god and it is clear that if he is representative, as he seems to be, Bolshevism must, in order to exist, create a new enemy class as soon as it has annihilated those already there.

## Murder and Mystery

*Driven Death.* By Nigel Orde-Poulett. Benn. 7s. 6d.

*No Witness.* By C. Fitzsimmons. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

*Death on the Highway.* By C. Robbins. Benn. 7s. 6d.

*Mr. Simpson Finds a Body.* By David Frome. Longmans Green. 7s. 6d.

*The Murder of Lydia.* By Joan A. Cowdroy. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

*The Madison Murder.* By Leo Grex. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

*Arrest.* By W. Proudfoot. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

*He Dies and Makes No Sign.* By Molly Thynne. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

**I**T is hard to believe that any man could be making £60,000 a year out of professional blackmail; yet harder, when we learn that he had only seven victims, who were therefore paying him on an average over £500 each per month; hardest of all, when the grounds of blackmail, in the only case in which they are revealed, are ludicrously inadequate. This is a case in "Driven Death," and though the author handles the mystery of Sir George Beald's murder in capable style, and has some taking points for those addicted to grouse shooting, he should really reflect more on probabilities. Mr. Orde-Poulett's amateur detective is a pleasant fellow.

In "No Witness" the sleuth is a professional attached to the police of a town on Long Island. This is a good specimen of the business-like American detective story, carefully worked out and with all the pieces dovetailed as by a first-rate cabinet-maker. If it falls short it is by reason of the lack of compelling atmosphere or of intrinsic interest in the characters concerned. Mr. Cortland Fitzsimmons has constructed a police inquiry with excellent verisimilitude, that will be welcomed by a wide circle of readers.

"Death on the Highway" has two ingenious characters in Clay Harrison, a barrister who has turned from practice of the law to criminal investigation, and his faithful clerk Henry, ready at a moment's notice to dash off anywhere and turn up at critical moments to get his employer out of a hole. A tramp found dead in a Surrey lane leads into a surprising web of international crime and, if the criminals do not appear to be of the most probable variety, nevertheless the reader has every opportunity provided him for feeling his hair rise upon his head. Mrs. Crewe is a sinister lady, and we do not feel certain that she will not bob up again in a fresh and perhaps even more thrilling avatar.

"Mr. Simpson Finds a Body" is really Mr. Frome's best up to date. He has given us three or four good thrillers, but his Mr. Simpson makes a great advance in this art and puts him in the small class of really good detective story writers. If he goes on like this, Mr. Frome will soon have a claim to be classed in the

front rank with experts like Mr. A. E. W. Mason and Miss Agatha Christie. Mr. Simpson, then, graphological expert to Scotland Yard, returning from a holiday abroad, finds a body in the study of his own house that has been shut up for three weeks on the conclusion of tenancy by an Australian gentleman.

It would be unfair to prospective readers to say more, for so closely is knit the web of Mr. Frome's tale that one could easily give away the secret without wanting to and yet, without being given a tip, he would be a singularly acute reader to spot the truth.

The ramifications of the mystery are wide, yet perfectly logical and roll out into a beautifully natural design, and our curiosity is whetted till almost the very end without the use of any adventitious tricks. Inspector Bull and Mr. Pinkerton, already favourites with Mr. Frome's readers, reappear in these pages, but what perhaps most marks the improvement in the author's method is that they do not occupy all the foreground on which are drawn with a sure hand a large number of people whose lives impinge on one another. Given the point of departure, which is not in the least an impossibility, the network of tragedy enveloping Mr. Frome's character might well be found in real life. Herein perhaps lies the particular attraction of the mystery. Mr. Frome has written not only a good thriller, but a good book. He is achieving a neat, virile style and, is, in a word, a writer with a future. For the present the public that likes fine sport will gobble up "Mr. Simpson Finds a Body."

#### *In Various Manners*

Lydia was a nasty piece of work and her murder is not intended to extort spasms of indignation from the reader. But it afforded a great chance for Chief Inspector Gorham and Miss Cowdroy's charming Chinese ex-detective Mr. Moh to exercise their ingenuity, in the course of which they further exercise that of the reader in pleasing, no less than exciting, fashion. The only trouble is this. . . But it would be iniquitous to give Miss Cowdroy's secret away even for the fun of arguing with her on a point of feminine psychology. Lovers of the detective story should read "The Murder of Lydia" as soon as possible. Then they will see the point and be in a position to argue it themselves, after having had a fine run for their money.

"The Madison Murder" is a bit complicated for this reviewer's taste, and a bit too slapdash. The author appears to overlook, among other things, the fact that a corpse, some time old, could never be taken for one freshly killed, especially on a frosty night, and that a bullet plugged into a corpse will not produce fresh bleeding, and that motor-cars cannot be driven fast through snow without chains on their tyres. If you can forget such things too, you may get a good thrill out of the murder of Sir Matthew Madison.

"Arrest" is not really a mystery, or a detective story at all, for the detection is virtually over before it begins. But it tells in charming and

exciting style what befell a young detective sent out to South America to catch an absconding banker. "Arrest" is full of fun and much agreeable description of manners in obscure South American republics. A good yarn.

Some crime stories are soporific, some readable, and a few are enthralling. Enthralling is the tale of how Julius Anthony, poor player in a cinema orchestra and good musician, disappeared one night on a friend's doorstep and was discovered dead in a kind of store-hole under the stage at his theatre. Miss Thynne handles the mystery of Anthony's death, crossed by the lines of the love between his daughter and the heir to the dukedom of Steynes, in a manner we could wish more generally followed; for she follows up—and we with her—the enquiry into the cause of the crime and the personality of the criminal, and then, having let us find the probable truth, plunges us into her palpitating chase of the murderer.

It is a capital story unfolded without bunkum, and therefore natural and seizing. Dr. Constantine, Miss Thynne's recruit to the large army of fiction amateur detectives, manages to be at once acute and sensible. That, after all, is a tangible sort of achievement. It is so easy to create this sort of character and also so easy to make pure parody and futility of it. To manage the creation successfully is quite another thing and, comparatively, a rare thing.

"He Dies and Makes No Sign" should cheer the hours of several thousand travellers and invalids.

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## FILMS

BY MARK FORREST

*14 Juillet.* Directed by René Clair. Academy.

*Hot Pepper.* Directed by John Blystone. Tivoli.

*Blessed Event.* Directed by Roy del Ruth. Regal.

"14 JUILLET" is Mr. Clair's fourth talking picture and the result must be put down as disappointing. The real trouble with it is that it lacks pace and the humour, though characteristic, is laboured too much to seem spontaneous. The fourteenth of July is National Fête day in France, and Mr. Clair contrives to get the atmosphere of this very surely and cleverly, but once he has put his audience in the mood, his detail and story remain too trite to keep the interest from flagging. His characterisation is still sure and is helped by some splendid acting by Annabella, Pola Illery, Raymond Cordy, once again playing a taxi driver, and Paul Olivier, who is more eccentric than ever; but the development of these characters is a somewhat funereal business which is not helped by an undistinguished musical accompaniment. With all these drawbacks, however, the picture should undoubtedly be seen for Mr. Clair's art is individual; he is one of the very few directors who uses his camera consistently and his nose for detail is always a fascinating part of his make-up.

### Somewhat Coarse

"Hot Pepper" is the type of picture with which I find myself totally out of sympathy; it features Victor McLaglen and Edmund Lowe, who have appeared together in other films belonging to this series which records the adventures of two American marines, Flagg and Quirt. These two roysterers are now civilians and are seen quarreling over a woman, played by Lupe Velez, whom Flagg smuggles unwittingly into the country and Quirt eventually launches as a cabaret dancer. The peculiar coarse humour which is the mainstay of the pictures in which these two appear has, to judge from this latest addition, pretty well petered out, and Edmund Lowe has become too good an actor to be wasted on this kind of stuff so I am hoping that with this film the series will be allowed to die a natural death. In any case it will be followed by "Cavalcade" on Monday. Mr. Coward's play has been filmed in Hollywood where Mr. Sheehan has spread his story over six acres and a quarter of a million pounds.

### An American Newspaper

Another good newspaper tale, "Blessed Event," is at the Regal. This picture hasn't the clever qualities of "The Front Page," but it is a racy entertainment which is full of amusement for those who understand American and the Americans. The hero is a gossip writer and his contemptible desire for news at any price leads to a situation which is as dramatic as it is unpleasant. Lee Tracy plays the unsympathetic rôle of the garbagemonger brilliantly and Mary Brian looks charming enough to have brought about his salvation earlier.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Quis Custodiet?

SIR,—Much publicity has recently been given to the efforts to save Carlton House Terrace: may I call attention to another instance of what Mr. Squire calls the uncontrolled and almost furtive destruction of important buildings?

This house, indeed, No. 1 Bedford Square, which is the building threatened, cannot perhaps be described as "important;" but it is probably the finest of the smaller late 18th century London houses, it is unique in design and decoration, both inside and out, and it is one of the masterpieces of its architect, Thomas Leverton. This being so, your readers may be surprised to learn that it is the deliberate policy of its landlords, the Trustees of the British Museum, first to make it uninhabitable and then to destroy it.

The new gallery which the generosity of Lord Duveen is providing for the Elgin Marbles is to be built across my small garden: and when it is completed a blank wall fifty feet high will rise four or five yards away from my drawingroom windows. I shall of course give up the house at the earliest possible opportunity and it will certainly never be used again except as offices, a purpose for which it is quite unsuited. The intention of the Trustees is ultimately to pull down the whole of the east side of Bedford Square in order to extend the Museum and thus to ruin the symmetry of the one untouched 18th century square left in London.

It is said that the Museum must extend: but the experts are far from being agreed that a new gallery is required to display the Elgin Marbles, and it is at least arguable that the whole policy behind the proposed extension is mistaken. The British Museum is a unique, an anomalous and an illogical institution, for no other great national library is also a great museum: some of its former departments have already been transferred to South Kensington; and it would be to the advantage of students, visitors, Londoners and the Museum itself that the process should gradually be continued and that South Kensington should become the Museum quarter of London, leaving Bedford Square intact and preserving the Bloomsbury side for the national library.

1, Bedford Square.

G. D. HOBSON.

### Defenders of the Faith!

SIR,—You may be interested to hear that my letter to you on the Foreign Policy of the B.B.C. has brought down on me German defenders of that policy as regards Poland, with wagon loads of propaganda, printed in English (in Berlin, evidently) for the use of those of our countrymen who do not know history and who have forgotten the origin and conduct of the war. It had been suspected by listeners-in that the B.B.C. speakers on Foreign Affairs were perhaps unconsciously representing the views of Berlin, and I think you will agree that my recent experience shows that this conjecture has some foundation.

I had a great many other letters, but they were all letters of agreement with my criticism. The defenders of the B.B.C. Foreign Policy do not, apparently, live in England, but in Germany.

VIOLET MILNER.

14, Manchester Sq., W.1.

### "The Women of Galsworthy"

SIR,—Now that the author of "The Forsyte Saga" has been laid to rest with all the honour due to him, I hope you will allow me to suggest to "Anne Armstrong" that she might profitably acquaint herself with a few facts concerning the "late Victorian household." She is constrained to admit that Galsworthy did not succeed in bringing his women to life in his earlier and, to my thinking, the best of his novels. Therefore she arbitrarily confines them to their drawing-room carpets! This strikes one of them, and doubtless many others of us who read her rhapsody as an original and amusing idea! I happen myself to serve as a quite typical example of the later Victorian woman of the professional classes, and I married a business man.

By that time (the late 'eighties) Girton and Newnham were working in full swing, also their younger sisters Somerville Hall and Lady Margaret College at Oxford, all ably conducted by the distinguished women at their heads. In the early 'nineties women were already trained Government factory inspectors—I knew one or two of these; others were trained charity organisers.

After our marriage, our means being decidedly limited, I embarked on journalism. Very soon I was allowed to join the staff of a purely literary weekly paper, and was well disciplined in the work by a strict but admirable editor.

Personal circumstances led to my having to renounce writing of every kind long ago, but I still know and enjoy a literary critic when reading one. Lyrical panegyric followed by arbitrary assertions, such as the comparison of Galsworthy to Balzac (to the disadvantage of Balzac) will not do—it really will not do!

A VICTORIAN MATRON.

[Why not "lyrical panegyric"? Why not compare Galsworthy to Balzac or Thackeray or Hardy or any other giant of literature? Can we know, can "Victorian Matron" know, what place Galsworthy will hold in the judgment of critics yet unborn? And her instances of Victorian freedom and adventure are surely a little partial and premature.—EDITOR, *Saturday Review*.]

#### 'Ware Wire

SIR,—It is all very well for Mr. Nugent to write about horses jumping wire as if this were of the slightest importance in this country—which it is not. But will he tell us how to teach a hunter to detect the length of barbed wire hidden in an ordinary fence and thus avoid being torn by it? That would be really useful.

Tidworth.

S. SPONGE.

#### Snuff and Service

SIR,—I can confirm Mr. Cheek's belief that Snuff is not unknown at Child's Bank. I was offered and enjoyed a pinch quite recently. But surely Child's dates further back than the reign of James I. Was it not in the reign of Edward VI that the original Child, who invented cheques, was Lord Mayor of London? Hence is said to date the custom of free beer for the City Police on Lord Mayor's Day. The history of the bank is told in "The Sign of the Marygold," privately printed, but there is a copy in the London Library. A CUSTOMER OF CHILD'S

#### The Face to do it

SIR,—I was going to write and tell Mr. Harrison that he was quite mistaken in his belief that the feminine custom of performing part of one's toilet in public had come to stay. But yesterday I had occasion to attend a more or less public luncheon and found myself sitting next a lady—by birth and position, to say nothing of title, which means nothing nowadays. Three times during the meal she retired behind the screen of an open handbag and performed the mysteries of *Bona Dea*. If this social custom spreads, polite conversation, already almost a lost art, will become more disjointed than ever.

NERVOUS MALE.

#### Understanding Reason

SIR,—In a notice, in your current issue, of Mr. John Drinkwater's new book, "Shakespeare," the second chapter of which is given wholly to an attack upon myself, your reviewer writes:

His (Mr. Drinkwater's) chapter on "Who Was Shakespeare?" would surely end the controversy, once for all, if those who *indulge in theory and cipher (sic) had the gift to understand reason (sic)*. Absence of any "gift," in myself, "to understand reason," is, of course, deplorable; but is not your reviewer's last-quoted clause a little premature? Mr. Drinkwater's great abilities, as poet, dramatist, and man-of-letters, command my personal admiration, as they do that of all educated Englishmen; but I do not, therefore, regard him as qualified, either by specialised knowledge, or by inherent faculty, successfully to maintain the orthodox views concerning Shakespearian authorship, against the mounting, and now unanswerable, case for Lord Oxford as the genuine "Shakespeare."

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PERCY ALLEN.

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## CITY.—BY OUR CITY EDITOR

*Lombard Street, Thursday.*

FROM the financial, or, indeed, any other point of view, the past week's events have hardly been encouraging and Stock Markets have in consequence been hesitant, though by no means exhibiting signs of nervousness. The increase of 180,000 in unemployed at home, coupled with the troublous times in Germany, not to mention France and the Michigan banking troubles in America, and the continual threat of war in the Far East have curbed the activities of the optimists, though there is no sign of the return of joyous times for the "Bears." The South African gold mining "boom" has abated pending the announcement of the Union Government's taxation policy and, despite hopes of a Smuts-Hertzog Coalition, it does not seem that such large differences will have to be met on the Stock Exchange account just ending as at one time appeared probable.

The Trade Returns for January inspired no confidence in markets owing to the further decline in exports, which were over £3,000,000 down on the month. Imports, however, continue to decrease and at £54,124,000 were £21,400,000 less than the total for January, 1931, so that the visible adverse trade balance has been reduced to about £21,000,000, compared with £32,000,000 in January, 1931. The estimates to be published later of the total balance of trade will give some idea as to how far this improvement in the situation has been offset by the decline in Great Britain's income from overseas investments, shipping services and other "Invisible Exports."

### Railway's Wretched Results.

Whether or not one is in favour of the recommendations of the Salter Report, the results now being published of our big railway systems for 1932, show the necessity for some sound legislative reform if the railways are to be saved from gradual decay. The companies have again made large economies in working expenditure, but this cannot go on indefinitely and, even with a big trade revival, it is to be doubted whether the companies could earn a reasonable return on their capital, though some of their prior charge stocks would then appear cheap at anything like present prices. The Great Western Railway startled the market by declaring a dividend of 3 per cent. for the year on its ordinary stock, thus preserving the full trustee status for all the company's prior charge issues. The revenue for 1932 hardly appeared to justify such a payment, which was only made with the aid of transfers of £1,100,000 from reserves, and it is something of an anomaly that while the G.W.R. prior charge stocks remain full trustee issues their position has been weakened financially by the company's recourse to reserves to maintain

this status. The Great Western report gives an interesting analysis of the destination of each £1 of the company's revenue. In 1932, 11s. 7d. of each £1 was absorbed by wages, 1s. 3d. by coal, 2s. 3d. other material, rates 1s. 9d. and interest and dividends 4s. 4d., the deficit being made good by 1s. 2d. from reserves compared with 4d. from reserves in the previous year.

### L.M.S. and Southern

The London, Midland and Scottish Railway, dependent upon the waning traffic of the heavy industries, had to deal with a desperate position and as the directors could make no payment on the ordinary stock, or even the 1923 preference issue, the company's stocks are no longer available as a fresh investment for trustees. The company saved no less than £2,680,000 in working expenses or 51 per cent. of the loss in gross receipts compared with 1931. Home Railway shares were finally depressed by the announcement of the Southern dividend of 1 per cent. on the company's preferred ordinary stock compared with 4 per cent. for 1931. The dividend, disappointing as it appears at first sight, was actually fully up to market anticipations and the fall in the shares was somewhat surprising as the Southern Railway's position was improved by the doubling of the amount carried forward at £207,000.

### "Undergrounds"

Even the enterprising Underground group could not escape the effects of the depression and the increase in unemployment, the parent company, which is a holding concern for the group of operating companies, paying 4½ per cent. for 1932 on its shares compared with a dividend of 7 per cent. for 1931, the group's net income being £180,000 lower while prior charges increased by £175,000. The railway companies operating under the "pooling" scheme are all paying 3 per cent. for the year on their ordinary stocks compared with 4½ per cent. for 1931, and the London General Omnibus ordinary shares receive 4½ per cent., tax free, for the year against 6½ per cent. for 1931.

### Good Life Bonus

The Provident Mutual Life Assurance Association, whose accounts for 1932 show a balance of income over expenditure of £600,622, have completed a quinquennial valuation to the close of last year disclosing a surplus of £1,094,173 in addition to £82,591 distributed during the five years as interim bonuses. The distribution of a further £858,905 is now recommended in further reversionary bonuses. The bonus is the highest in the Association's history with the exception of the 5s. per cent. higher rate for the 1927 quinquennium, and in addition there is an increase in the investment reserve and carry forward.

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## THEATRE

*Shaftesbury Theatre.*—"Between Friends," by Arthur Menzies, and "Major."

IT is ridiculous to damn a farcical comedy which makes one laugh because its defects as a piece of stage construction are obvious, and I say at once that "Between Friends" amused me enormously and that I was grateful to authors and cast.

It is all about a stolid man, his temperamental wife, and his normally stolid best friend. The friend is always on the verge of being run away with by the wife, a Frenchwoman who can neither understand nor tolerate her husband's passion for cricket and golf, and he is inevitably saved in the end by and for the charming English girl.

The whole affair is conducted with riotous irresponsibility, and the zeal of husband, wife, friend, girl, uncle, aunt, butler and all the house party for talking over their private affairs as if they were discussing a cocktail party creates genuinely comic situations and lends itself to a high sort of comedy. The theme of cricket is "plugged" too hard, and the game of golf does not give much relief as a contrast. A good deal of the dialogue is unmeaning and some of the essential exits and entrances of the characters are managed clumsily. But there are witty lines, well-contrived situations, good "curtains," and good humour.

Madeleine Lambert is extremely clever as the wife; her charm, variety, and vivacity are a real asset to this play and to the English stage. Athole Stewart gave character to the playwright's rather vague conception of the uncle; Basil Foster had neither difficulty nor real opportunity as the husband; Marjorie Taylor showed a great deal of charm and skill as the saving grace, and Hugh Wakefield, the friend, carried the whole thing to shouts of laughter where, without him, it might have faded away.

There may be a good "run" in this production. In these depressing days there ought to be.

G.C.P.

*Arts Theatre Club.* Mlle. Julie. By August Strindberg.

"Mlle Julie," which opens the season of the Pitoëff company from Paris at the Arts Theatre, is a relatively sane specimen of the Swedish master's work. Yet it is frankly impossible to explain by any rational motives the main idea of the play, which consists in the Count's daughter, Mlle Julie, giving herself to the butler and cutting her throat in the pantry. There is force and trenchant workmanship in the plot which gives considerable scope to actors with the gift of macabre suggestion.

Mme. Pitoëff was not very well cast for the rôle of Mlle Julie, but there was sinister suggestion in her spasmodic emotion. M. Pitoëff made the most of the part of the nasty butler.

H.W.A.

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## Next Week's Broadcasting

IT is one of the simplest things in the world to give good advice to people who are entering new spheres of activity. Just to show how easy it is, here are a few suggestions for Eric Maschwitz, who will in future be responsible for light entertainment:—

That there may be more programmes of the "Music Hall" type, and that such programmes be left in the capable hands of John E. Sharman;

That "Non-Stop Variety" *et hoc genus omne* may be given a decent burial;

That Gordon McConnell may be persuaded to write some more Revues;

That the "Miscellany" programmes should not necessitate the brow being lifted any higher;

That authors of Revues should be encouraged to pay more attention to the shape and form of the revue.

"Women and Children First," by C. Denis Freeman, suffered in this latter respect. There was some good material in it, especially the burlesque at the end, but the sketches were inconclusive and the programme itself led to nowhere in particular. A good Revue must have point, and it should have some central thread which will help to retain the attention; it is not merely a succession of disconnected items. Freeman can do, and has done in the past, better than this.

## The Saturday Acrostics

### DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 22

WHAT THE POOR INDIAN ASKS NOT, POPE WILL TELL US;  
OF ANGEL OR OF SERAPH LO'S NOT JEALOUS.

1. Takes place when aught is cancelled and made void.
2. Clip at each end whom Haggith's son annoyed.
3. Temperate: by satiety ne'er cloyed.
4. On Ethiopia's sons with favour looks.
5. Figures full off in Dutchmen's business books.
6. Heart of a king whose end was grief and dole.
7. A little leaven leaveneth the whole.
8. In high repute where wandering Arabs dwell.
9. Young Wamba's sire, if I remember well.
10. Core of a fissure that makes dumb the lute.
11. Curtail a pain that's often most acute.
12. Hares, pheasants, partridges—he cares for these.
13. Deep sunk in luxury and shameful ease.

### SOLUTION OF ACROSTIC No. 21

T	a	l	p	A						
I	m	i	t	a	t	o	R			
T	i	t	a	n	i	C				
l	U	n	c	H						
S	a	u	c	e	R					
g	O	A	I							
A	s	S								
T	h	e	r	a	p	e	u	t	i	C
s	E	p	u	l	c	h	r	A	I	
S	c	e	p	t	i	c	a	L		

No correct solution of Acrostic No. 20 has been received and consequently no prize will be awarded.

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